

ARIZONA RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION ANNUAL AWARDS

June 14, 2022



ARIZONA RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Introduction of Board Members

Upcoming election of board members- Applications due June 30, 2022

ARIZONA RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

The Arizona Rural Health Service Awards honor outstanding rural health volunteers, professionals, and programs for their dedication and commitment to improving the health of rural residents of our state. Each year the Arizona Rural Health Association (AzRHA) recognizes the award winners at the annual Arizona Rural Health Conference.

EXCEPTIONAL RURAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

Exceptional Rural Health Professional

•The **Exceptional Rural Health Professional Award** recognizes an individual for leadership in bringing health services to rural populations. The Professional Award is meant to be inclusive of all health disciplines (e.g., dentistry, optometry, nursing, behavioral health, public health, administrator, etc.). Factors taken into consideration include providing or promoting outstanding care, involvement in the community, and lasting contributions to the health care system. This award acknowledges significant contribution to rural health through distinguished personal leadership.

EXCEPTIONAL RURAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

- **Recipient: Jason Zibart**
- **Nominator: Gary Kartchner**

• Jason is a leader in establishing telehealth solutions that directly impact the quality of our patients' stay. Jason spends a considerable amount of time outside business hours staffing booths and attending other events in representing Benson Hospital. I'm always seeing his social media feed filled with the latest even he's at, doing things that directly impact our community for the better. As a critical access hospital, we all wear multiple hats and are required to work with limited resources. I'm always impressed with what Jason has been able to do and continues to do for both the hospital and the community of Benson and surrounding areas.

DISTINGUISHED MARTHA ORTIZ VOLUNTEER AWARD

DISTINGUISHED MARTHA ORTIZ VOLUNTEER

- The **Distinguished Martha Ortiz Volunteer Award** honors an individual who has contributed extensive time, dedication, and commitment to supporting a rural health program or project that is making an identifiable difference in the health care provided to people in Arizona's rural and/or medically underserved communities. This award also considers an individual who has been a strong advocate in influencing and shaping policies and programs that impact the provision of health care to residents of rural and/or medically underserved communities in Arizona.

DISTINGUISHED MARTHA ORTIZ VOLUNTEER AWARD

- Recipient: William Dudley
- Nominator: Alma Ramirez
- ***Bill exemplifies what it means to be committed to the health and wellness of a rural community. He demonstrates compassion, stewardship and seeks new ways to improve the health and wellbeing of the community that he so clearly loves. Thanks to Bill, people from this small rural community can take ESL classes, parents of children ages 0-to 5 are learning creative ways to help their children learn, as well as assisting families to receive free health care services, such as health screening, vaccinations, etc. I can honestly say that Bill will do what he can to break down barriers and overcome any obstacles to ensure that this small rural community is not forgotten or left behind. He is a champion to these families and deserves recognition for what he does day in and day out without expecting anything in return or recognition.***

INSPIRING RURAL HEALTH PROGRAM

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- The **Inspiring Rural Health Program Award** recognizes a program within a community, at the local or state level, that involves one or more health professionals or entities, and promotes or facilitates the development of rural health delivery systems. Factors considered include coordination of services, networking and collaboration, innovation in development and implementation, and lasting impact of the program. This award honors excellence in the provision of health services to rural and/or other medically underserved people.

INSPIRING RURAL HEALTH PROGRAM

- **Recipient:** NAMI Payson Warming Center
- **Nominator:** Patty Wisner

•For years many people in our community said we needed to provide services for the homeless, which includes people traveling through the community, families who suddenly found themselves evicted, homeless veterans and others living in the woods around Payson, many of whom suffered from mental illness. Emily and Skyler Brice were instrumental in meeting with community leaders and volunteers to start up the Payson Homeless and Homeless Veterans Initiative, which opened the Warming Center three years ago. Every night a warm meal is prepared and provided for anyone who comes through the door, and there is emergency shelter for those who need it. In addition, they connect people to health services, vocational services, mental health supports and more. This program, its leaders and volunteers all deserve the Inspiring Health Program of the Year Award.

RONALD WEINSTEIN TELEHEALTH INNOVATION AWARD

Ronald Weinstein Telehealth Innovation Award

- The **Ronald S. Weinstein Innovation Award** recognizes an individual who has pioneered the use of telehealth technology and/or telehealth policy that advanced healthcare access for people living in rural and/or remote areas of Arizona.

RONALD WEINSTEIN TELEHEALTH INNOVATION AWARD

Recipient: Sara Gibson

- In 1995 Dr. Gibson was the sole psychiatrist seeing Medicaid members in Apache county. She lived in Flagstaff and had a 2 ½ hour and 150-mile commute to serve those members. Hours and money were spent driving that would have been better used to treat our underserved members. Recruiting providers for members in the remote locations and small communities across Northern Arizona was incredibly difficult and there was and is a shortage of qualified providers already. The providers that were serving these remote underserved areas were working unbelievable hours on top of the commutes. Dr. Gibson worked with the Northern Arizona Behavioral Health Authority (NARBHA) to get funding and to start a telemedicine network in Northern Arizona. That network went live in 1996 and was the first telemedicine network in Northern Arizona. It quickly grew from a doctor located in Flagstaff seeing members in St. Johns and Springerville to doctors from all over the country seeing members all over Arizona, all due to Dr. Gibson's passion for her patients.
- Dr. Gibson not only was instrumental in creating this telemedicine network, but she has tirelessly worked in policy and education to expand care and knock down barriers that members face when trying to access care. She has worked with the Arizona Telemedicine Program and the American Telemedicine Association on best practices and guidelines for telebehavioral health. She is a recognized national expert in telehealth. She has been featured on the front page of the New York Times in 2006 for her work and presented to the White House about controlled substance prescribing via telehealth 2019 along with numerous other articles and trainings she has created over the last 27 years.